BEFORE THE WAR.

A Reminiscence of Louisiana in Old Slavery Times.

The code and laws of Louisiana are founded on the Code Napoleon and that on the Code Justinian of Rome, and is more explicit and peculiar in its workings, than the laws of our other States. During the year 1854, a wealthy slave-trader, named Botts, a Virginian by birth, who lived in the garden suburbs of New Orleans, and who owned a slave crawl on Common street, was suddenly stricken with apoplexy and died without making a will. The law requires that on the death of any person of wealth, more or less, the Judge of the District Court shall then appoint a notary to take an inventory of the property, together with a curator, also an attorney to represent absent heirs and two appraisers. After performing the duties prescribed, the document is signed by all the parties and submitted to the Judge for homologation. Judge Kennedy, in the case of Botts, appointed Edwin F. notary, Tom Howard, attorney to represent absent heirs, a Mr. Sewell curator, and two young French creoles appraisers. On receiving their appointments the gentlemen in question visited the office and bank where Botts had kept his deposits and titles to slave property, and then went in carriages to the residence of the deceased, which was on the outskirts of the city. It was an elegant Southern, home embowered in all the luxurious splendor of shrubbery, for which Louisiana is known, its whole aspect denoting opulence and luxury. As the party alighted they were greeted with the sound of religious music, one of those magnificent requiems for the dead, sung by two female voices in Italian, and so pathetic and soulful, that with one accord these men stood bareheaded until it was ended, then advancing to the door they knocked and were admitted by a lady, tall and commanding of figure, courteous and graceful, dressed in deep mourning, who had such an air of refinement that they all were astonished that Botts should have been so fortunate as to have secured such a woman as his wife. The notary briefly announced the business of the party and they were immediately ushered into the spacious parlors. After the house, ground, household furniture and effects had been examined and appraised the negro slaves were admitted individually to the presence of the gentlemen and were examined, valued and approved, according to custom. The notary then announced that their business was terminated, on which the attorney for the absent heirs, Mr. Howard, who had been talking aside with the curator, said that he desised to question Mrs. Botts, which, of course was his legal right and duty. He asked: "Are you Mrs. Botts?" To which she replied with a bow. Continuing his questions, he said: "I don't want to distress you, madam, but it is necessary that you show me your marriage certificate." At which the lady burst into an agony of tears that effected even those stern men of law. Ignoring the indignation readable on the faces of his associates, he continued: "On my honor, madam, I have no wish to wound or pain you, but simply have duty to perform, and I must ask you, Are you a free woman of color? and if so, show me your free papers and end this most terrible and unpleasant interview." There was no reply to this except renewed sobs and almost total abasement of the body. She was not the wife of Mr. Botts, nor had she had her free papers. All the gentlemen withdrawing but the notary, she told her history, which was this: She was the daughter of a wealthy Virginia planter and had been reared in luxury and sent to France to complete her education. On her return to her father's house, ignorant of her social status, she was received as the honored daughter of an ancestral house. Her father, dying of paralysis, was unable to perform what he had promised her mother to do—furnish the mother and their child free papers—and so left his unfortunate family (slaves in fact and in law) to the mercy of his relatives, who came forward apparently indignant at the manner in which money had been spent on "a negro family," and both mother and daughter were sold as slaves. Botts secured the daughter at the sale, and, becoming interested and enamored with her, promised to make her free if she would live with him as his wife. She assented, simply because she could do nothing else, the result of which I have shown you. The situation was so appalling and was so appreciated by the gentlemen appointed by the court that, to the honor of the Judge, this lady was promptly freed and sent North, with sufficient money to make her comfortable beyond want.

The Dome of St. Peter's.

An important piece of work has just been brought to a successful conclusion in Rome, in the complete renewal of the leaden envelope of the dome of St. Peter's church in Rome. It has occupied twelve years, and has cost over 200,000 lire, about $40,000. The original covering was applied to the dome in an imperfect fashion, which made continuous repairs a necessity, and at last it was determined to strip off the whole envelope and substitute a new one on a better system. New lead was imported from Spain and mixed with the old lead in the proportion of one part of old to two parts of new. The total weight of the new cover is given at 354,305 kilograms, and if it were spread out flat it would occupy an area of about an acre and a half. In stripping off the old plates three of them were found to be of gilded copper.—Brooklyn Eagle.

SACRAMENTO.

It was an odd name for a girl—Sacramento.

So the girl herself thought as she stooped down beside a spring at the foot of a cotton-wood tree and lazily dropped her pail into the water.

"It ought to have been given to a boy if it was a fit name to give anybody," she said quite aloud. "But I'm more boy than girl, anyway."

This fact was added rather bitterly, as she looked at her brown, rough hands and her bare ankles, and thought of the "boy's work" she had to do.

And it was hard to believe that this was the best kind of a life for a young girl like Sacramento. Here she lived alone, for her father was down at the mouth of the canon all day. The garden work she was obliged to do, and the care of the cattle fell upon her. It was not often that she saw any person but her father, although now and then, in spite of herself, she came in contact with the rude men of the mining camp up above.

Yet Sacramento had her dream, one that she "scarcely dared own," but it came to her often as she went about her work.

She knew that down at Santa Barbara and in the towns along the coast, and far, far away across wide stretches of continent to the great east, there were girls who lived very different from her life, and she dreamed of such a life for herself.

"Oh, if I could only go away from here!" she cried out, almost as one cries out for help." If I could only go down to San Erancisco and go to school there for a single year! Ah, if I only had $500."

Suddenly there was a step—not of a man, but a horse—on the bank behind her, and then some one spoke. She knew the voice without looking up. It was Pete Larrabee, a fellow who lived down on Hahnemann's plantation, two miles along the trail. He sometimes rode by. He had not heard her last words at all; yet strangely enough his own were a repetition of them.

"Five hundred dollars, Sac," said he, "$500 in gold! D'ye want to earn it? Ther's yer chance," and he threw down to her a bit of paper crumpled into a ball.

She picked it up, and slowly unfolding it, ran her eye over its contents:

$500 REWARD.

The above amount will be paid for information leading to the arrest, dead or alive, of Walter Somers who has worked for some time past on Maxwell's ranch. Said Somers is about 18 years old and 5½ feet high, rather good looking, with light, curly hair, blue eyes and a light moustache. When last seen he had on a black slouch hat, gray business suit, with blue flannel shirt, and boots with red tops marked with the maker's name.

The name of the county sheriff was signed at the bottom of the bill. Sacramento, having glanced it through, looked up.

"He's been a stealin' horses," exclaimed Pete. "Got off last night with four of Maxwell's best somewheres. That reward won't do much good, though. The Regulators'll lasso him and string him up long 'fore the law'll git started. They're havin' a meetin' now up at the Gulch. I tell ye they are mad. They'll make quick work if they ketch him. Yer father's there. Ye needn't look for him home afore night, much."

Then, after a word or two more, the man rode on, and presently Sacramento took up her pail, and with the sheriff's bill still in her hand went slowly up the bank and across the trail toward the house, thinking very seriously about the $500 all the while.

It was some hours after this, and the afternoon sun was going down behind the tops of the mountains, that Sacramento, having finished her housework, was preparing to sit down on the porch to do her sewing, when she was met in the doorway by a young man she had never seen before. And yet he was no stranger. The girl knew him instantly, although the slouch hat was pulled down over the flaxen hair and blue eyes, and the gray pants, torn and muddy, had been drawn out of the boot-legs so as to no longer allow the red tops of the boots with the owners name to be seen. It was the horse-thief.

She did not, however, express any surprise as she saw him. She was accustomed to the sight of rough, evil men; and at the first glance she had felt that this one could not be either very wicked or very dangerous. He was not much more than a lad, and had an air of gentleness and good breeding about him that six months of western life, and the miserable plight he was in at that moment had by no means destroyed. He seemed to be short for breath, too, and was trembling as if he had been running.

Instinctively he raised his hand toward his hat, and then, bethinking himself, dropped it again.

"Could you give me something to eat and drink?" he asked, in a hesitating voice. "Anything will do. I am very hungry. I—I have had nothing to eat since last night."

"Come in," said Sacramento, gravely. In her voice there was neither kindness nor unkindness, she trying to realize the situation she was in. "Come in and sit down!"

Then she went into the closet near by and began taking down milk and bread and meat, as she slowly did so turning over the matter in her mind. Here was this man who had been stealing horses and for whose capture $500 was offered, in her own kitchen. Exactly the sum she had been wishing for—the sum that would take her down to San Francisco to school and help to make a lady of herself. And this sum may be hers if she could in some way secure this stranger, or somehow keep him in the house until help arrived. Help? Why, she hardly needed help. He was weak and exhausted, and in the drawer of the kitchen table there was a loaded revolver, which she well knew how to use.

She came out presently and set the things before him, bringing also a teapot from the stove and pouring for him a cup of tea. Then she went and sat down by the window and watched him furtively as he ate.

In spite of his caution, he had taken off his hat while he was eating. She could better see what he was like. It was an almost boyish face, worn but not wicked, with the curling hair lying in damp clusters upon his pale brow. In the hands, small and well shaped, and in all his motions and manner, she felt that she could read something of his story. She had heard before this how young lads in the east, filled with romantic notions about western life and adventure, sometimes left their luxurious homes and found their way out to the ranches of the Pacific. Perhaps he was one of these.

As she looked at him, fancying all this, and realizing the terrible strait he was in, and the probable dark fate that was before him, her heart yearned with true womanly sympathy; and her feeling found expression before she was able to restrain derself.

"Oh, how could you do it? How could you do it?" she suddenly exclaimed, her voice quite full of what she felt.

He looked up at her in wonder, but as his eyes met her's he understood her.

"I didn't do it. Upon my honor I did not," he said. "It was that man Dennis."

Sacramento breathed a great sigh of relief. Horse-stealing was held in that section to be a crime worse than murder, and she was by no means free from the popular estimate of its grave nature.

"Oh, I am glad of that!" cried she, "But—" she hesitated, and then went on doubtfully. "But, then, how was it? Why did you run away?"

"It was Dennis' doings, their laying it to me. He did that to clear himself. And after that you know as well as I do that there would have been no use in trying to prove myself innocent. They always hang a horse thief first and then consider his guilt afterwards. I had to run to save my life."

"Do you know that there is a reward offered for your capture?"

"I know that the Regulators are after me," answered the young fellow, sullenly. "They came pretty near catching me, too, this noon. I just escaped them and came down the cannon by the mountain trail. I have had a hard run for it, and what with no sleep for 24 hours, I am about used up. I feel as though I could not go another step when I saw your house. You—you have been very good to me. I shall never forget——"

"But what are you going to do now?" interrupted Sacramento. "You are not safe here."

"I know it. But I threw them off the track this noon, and I do not think they are within five miles of me. Now, I have had something to eat. I will take to the woods again. I hope I may get clear away. If I don't" his voice trembled and tears came into his eyes. "If I don't I shall get a hanging, I suppose. Oh, what a fool I was not to prefer home to this sort of thing! And yet, I wouldn't care much, either, if it wasn't for my father and mother." And there the poor fellow fairly broke down.

"Hark!" Sacramento exclaimed. She had been crying, too; she could not help it.

They both listened. In a moment they heard plainly the sound of horses coming down the trail. The girl turned with instant self-possession.

"Go in there! Quick! Quick! There is not a moment to lose! Here take your hat!"

And handing his hat to him, she pushed him across the room and into her own little room that led off from it. Then she hurriedly cleared the table again, barely finishing the task as the horsemen halted at the door.

There were three of them. One was her father. Sacramento knew the other two men by sight. They were rough, but of the better sort of those who made up the dwellers of Kelly Gulch. The faces of all three were stern and forbidding, and they evidently had been riding hard. They dismounted together.

"Sac," began her father, as he entered the door, "hev ye seen anything of a young chap, afoot or a horseback, coming this way?"

Sacramento had expected the question, and was ready for it. And she meant, if possible, to answer without a lie.

"A young chap, about eighteen years, and five feet and a half high, rather good looking, and with red-top boots on?" replied she,

"Yes! yes! That's him!" cried one of the other men. Has he been here?"

"I was only quoting him from this handbill," said Sacramento, taking the paper from the shelf where she had laid it.

"Then you hain't seen him at all?" asked her father.

"I have been right here all day, and nobody has gone by except Pete Larrabee. It was he who gave me the bill. Are you sure that he came this way, the—the—horsethief?"

"No; but we didn't know but he might. The chances is that he sloped off to the mountains, meanin' to go through Stovepipe pass. They'll git him, though, afore sundown."

"It's sundown now," observed Sacramento.

"Then they've got him now," was the sententious response. "And we should be late for the hangin' ef we sh'd go back. Leastways" —this was added to his companions— "you'd better come in and have a bite afore you go."

So presently the three men sat down to the supper that the young girl quickly prepared for them. And while they were eating, she herself at her father's bidding, went out to take the saddle off Bueno, his horse, and give him feed. As she approached the door once more, a few minutes after, she heard words which caused her to stop and listen.

"I don't like ter say anything against thet kid o' yourn, neighbor," one of the men was saying, "but it hez kinder seemed ter me all ther whiles' though she sorter hed some' at on her mind like. Ye don't 'spose she knows anything 'bout thet young feller arter all?"

Sacramento's father laughed at this as though it was too absurd to be considered.

The other, however, was not to be laughed out of his suspicions. "Fur all we know," persisted he, "she may hev hid him here somewhere on the premmyses." "It's easy enough to see," returned the proprietor of the said "premmysis," testily. "Where d'ye think she's hid him? In her bedroom?"

As he said this, Sacramento, who was now near enough to see into the kitchen, saw her father rise from his chair and step to the door of the room where she had concealed the fugitive. Her heart almost stopped beating as she saw him push open the door and enter the room followed by his companion.

"We'll make a clus search of it while were about it." she heard him say within.

And then she stood there in terrible suspense upon the porch, expecting every instant to hear the shout that would follow the discovery of the fugitive.

But no such shout was heard; and instead of it, a moment later, the two men came out again, her father laughing at his friend.

What could it mean? Had the young man been able to conceal himself in the room and so evade their search? That was not possible. Then she thought of the window. Could he have escaped from the room by that? The window was so small she could scarcely believe that he could have crept through it. And yet he must have done so.

She went hurredly to the back of the house and then down beyond the horse sheds. No one could be seen. She halted a moment under a live oak tree just at the edge of the garden. The evening was very calm and still, and the twilight shadows were deepening fast. Was it the rustling of the wind in the boughs overhead that caught her ear? she listened.

"Hist! I am here—in the tree."

The words came in a distinct whisper from directly above her.

She stood and thought a single moment before replying. Then she said, "You must get away from here at once," in an eager whisper. "One of them men suspects something, and they may at any moment make a search of the place. I am going into the house a minute. Get down at once and go through the garden and across the trail to a spring that you will find there. It's at the foot of a big cottonwood tree. Stay right there until I come."

Then she went hurriedly to the house. The three men were still sitting at the table, and Sacramento felt rather than saw that one of them still regarded her suspiciously as she came in. She did not speak to them at all, but went directly through the kitchen to her own room, and in a moment more came out, went about her work in the kitchen, and took up a pail apparently to go to the spring for water.

Ten minutes later, standing in the shadow of the cottonwood, young Somers heard a step, and then Sacramento, leading Bueno all saddled and bridled, appeared. He started forward.

"Hush!" she said "they may come out at any moment. Listen to what I say. Your life depends on it. You must ride straight down the trial for a quarter of a mile. Then, close by a big cotton wood, just like this you will strike a path to the left. Bueno will know it, once you get him in it. It will bring you out half a mile on, at a corduroy road that crosses the swamp. The end of this corduroy has got out of order and there are some logs laid. Lead Bueno across then pull the logs away. If you do that it will make trouble for those who follow you. Beyond the swamp is a big plan. Strike straight across it, having the moon square on your right—the moon will be up, by that time—and three hours riding will bring you to the new railroad. After that—God help you to get safe away!"

Sacramento paused and put out her hand. "Can you remember?" she demanded.

"I can; but I can never forget—"

Never mind that, Here, take this. It is a little money. You will need it. Now mount and ride—slowly a little way, and then for your life."

The young man still had hold of her hand. The tears came into his eyes. The next moment he was gone.

The next morning Sacramento told her father the story and coaxed him into forgiving her. And the following afternoon a man brought Bueno over from the railroad town; and then she knew that the fugitive was safe.

Six weeks later a lawyer from Santa Barbara appeared with a letter from Walter Somers. He was with his friends in New York. He begged Sacramento to accept, as a gift of gratitude, at least the amount of the reward that had been offered.

And so it was that she went down to San Francisco to school that winter, after all.

The Iron Walls of France and England.

From the German Military Gazette.

Great Britain still holds first place with her armored fleet; France, second; Germany, third; Italy, fourth; Russia, fifth, and Austria sixth. But at the present moment France is building fourteen vessels of the most powerful model and eight armored vessels for coast defense. Therefore, in four years France will have thirty war vessels, twelve of which will be first-class, and England thirty-two, only one of which will be of the same strength as any one of the twelve French ships. Italy is now building five first-class war vessels; Russia three and three iron-clad cruisers; Germany one iron-clad cruiser and two gun boats; Austria one war vessel, and Denmark one iron-clad for coast defense.

Consequently the maritime pre-eminence of Great Britian is decidedly menaced by France. England being obliged to employ a great portion of her fleet in the Mediterranean and at different distant points, it is fair to presume that in 1887 or 1888 France would be able to oppose a fleet of 42 armored vessels against an English one of 30 at the most, including even the vessels for coast defense.

SHAMS AND FRAUDS.

Some Unvarnished Truths About "Sassiety" at the National Capital.

Although there is a great show and any amount of "social position" and "rank" in Washington, there is not an equal amount of wealth to support it in two-thirds of the cases. The majority of those who shine in society and are the most prominent and irrepressible are dependent on Government salaries, and it takes close management to make them suffice for plain living and a place in society. Many of the Senators are wealthy; but they are the only ones, as a class, who have great wealth; and the moneyed people, as the rich winter residents who come only as private citizens are called, are easily counted. Each season Washington runs over with heiresses, and penniless girls, and widows who come to Washington as to a great matrimonial market, and wear themselves half out in the struggle to get into and keep in society. Rich men never come to hunt for wives in this modern Smithfield, and when a New York millionaire did take a Washington bride it was a pretty girl in straitened circumstances, who had never been known in the society army and navy germans and legation balls. Young army and naval officers are the most mercinary lot of all, and they invariably save up their leaves of absence to spend them in Washington during the winter months. One miscreant in epaulets once horrified some married ladies by saying: "It pays us poor fellows on short commons to pass a season in Washington sending boquets and spend all our money on the girls, for all the rich girls go there, and their fortunes are only equivalents for the social position that we can give them.

Sometimes these gay speculators get terribly sold, as not every papa that passes for a millionaire is really one, and heiress is a name very easily ticketed to a girl who dresses well. Recently there has been a notorious case of one of these uniformed fortune-hunters getting the supposed heiress after a long siege, only to find too late that the fortune was all in the air, vanished, gone up like smoke. To balance this there is the case of another young officer, who, although engaged to a great heiress now in Europe finishing her French and buying her trousseau, longs to be released from those golden fetters to marry a penniless orphan employed in one of the departments here. People who believe in the old-fashioned love stories admire and sympathize deeply with this crooked course of true love, but his brother officers think the distracted youth a plain and simple lunatic.

A joke is often told on one very punctilious army officer, who in the course of frontier experiences found his ex-laundress the wife of a Congressman. The laundress' rise and the growth of her husband's fortune could not bring the ladies of the fort to recognize her, and this particular officer, although now a General, could remember some stormy scenes, when, as a poor young Lieutenant, he had scored and upbraided the laundress about matters of starch, buttons and plain mending. She fell in his way next at some celebration or event where her husband, the Congressman, was in one of the front carriages of the procession, and she, the gorgeous figure, on the platform crowded with the distinguished people of the day. The General in his uniform was introduced and her voice and face sent his memory chasing backwards. Just about as the identity was becoming clear her talk went on to the winter that she had just passed in Washington. Her comments on society and people at the capital wound up consolingly with this: "O, yes! I found, too, that army officers go in quite good society at Washington." When this got into army gossip it furnished as much amusement as a remark that once rose above the hum of voices at a dinner party here when the same woman, who looked sixty and wore a raven-black wig over a face seamed with a hundred wrinkles, simperingly said: "Yes, I mean to wear baby blue until I am thirty."—*Washington Cor. St. Louis Globe Democrat.*

Have to Argue.

A man, upon entering a yard surrounding a cabin, was bitten by a dog. Just then an old negro came out, and nodding to the man who was writhing in pain, said:

"De animal bite yer, sah?"

"Of course he did. Came very near tearing me all to pieces."

"Sorry sah, but I tells yer whut's er fack. Yer ken boas' dat yer wuz bit by de fines' dog in dis neighborhood. I gin ten dollars yeah er fo las' fur dat pup, an' I'se found dat he's wuth it."

"You good for nothing old hound, I ought to knock your head off."

"W'y? Jes bercase I gin so much fur de dog? Wa'n't none o' yer bus'ness how much I paid ez laung ez it wuz my money. I declar' ter goodness, white folks is gittin' so cuis an' particuler dese days dat er pusson doan know how ter please 'em. Come er makin' er mout er roun heah case I seed fit ter buy er valuable dog. Better git outen dis yard an' go on erbout yer bus'ness."

When the indignant man had gone, the old rascal, turning to his wife, said: "Polly, yer got ter argy wid white folks dese days, fur ef yer doan da ain' gwine 'spect yer.—*Arkansaw Traveler.*

Miseries of Jury Duty.

"I'll never serve on another jury as long as I live," said one of the McQuade jurors to a friend.

"Yes it must be very tiresome," replied the friend.

"It is, indeed, but that's not what I'm complaining about."

"The loss of time is not repaid by the two dollars a day jury fee!"

"I didn't mind the loss of time so much. It was not the loss of time that galled me."

"What is it that exasperated you so much?"

"One of the morning papers described me as 'a big headed young man with ears like transparent turrets'"—*Texas Siftings.*